

A REMINISCENCE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

BY A. CONAN DOYLE

(From the Diaries of His Friend, John H. Watson, M. D.)

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In the third week of November, in the year 1893, a dense yellow fog settled down upon London. From the Monday to the Thursday I doubt whether it was ever possible, from our windows in Baker street, to see the loom of the opposite houses. The first day Holmes had spent in cross-indexing his huge book of references. The second and third had been patiently occupied upon a subject which he had recently made his hobby—the music of the Middle Ages. When, for the fourth time, we saw the greasy, heavy brown swirl still drifting past us, my comrade's impatience and active nature could endure this drab existence no longer.

"Nothing of interest in the paper, Watson?" he asked.

"By Jove! here comes something at last to break our dead monotony."

It was the maid with a telegram. Holmes tore it open and burst out laughing.

"Well! well! What next?" said he. "Brother Mycroft is coming round."

Holmes handed me his brother's telegram.

"Must see you over Cadogan West. Coming at once, Mycroft."

"Cadogan West? I have heard the name."

"It recalls nothing to my mind. But that Mycroft should break out in this erratic fashion! A planet might as well leave its orbit. By the way, do you know what Mycroft is?"

"You told me he had some small office under the British government."

Holmes chuckled.

"I did not know you quite so well in those days. One has to be discreet when one talks of high matters of state. You are right in thinking that

he is under the British government. You would also be right in a sense if you said that occasionally he is the British government. Mycroft draws 450 pounds a year, remains a subordinate, has no ambitions of any kind, will receive neither honor nor title, but remains the most indispensable man in the country."

"But who is Cadogan West, and what is he to Mycroft?"

"I have it!" I cried, and plunged among the litter of papers upon the sofa. "Cadogan West was the young man who was found dead on the Underground on Tuesday morning."

"He left Woolwich suddenly on Monday night. Was last seen by his fiancée, Miss Violet Westbury, whom he left abruptly in the fog about seven-thirty that evening. There was no quarrel between them, and she can give no motive for his action. The next thing he was discovered dead."

"Very good. The case is definite enough. The man, dead or alive, either fell or was precipitated from the train. So much is clear to me. Continue."

"There was no ticket in his pockets."

"No ticket! Dear me, Watson, this is really very singular. I understand that there was no sign of robbery?"

"Apparently not. There is a list here of his possessions. His purse contained two pounds fifteen. He had also a check-book on the Woolwich Branch of the Capital & Counties Bank. Through this his identity was established. There were also two dress-circle tickets for the Woolwich Theater, dated for that very evening. Also a small packet of technical papers."

Holmes gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"There we have it at last, Watson! British government—Woolwich Arsenal—technical papers—Brother